

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Friday, November 2, 2018
Sheraton Lisle Naperville, 3000 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
APPROVED MINUTES

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Absent	Staff
Kathleen Bush	Maria Nanos	Gwenn Eyer
Alice Couch	Anne O'Malley	Jen Florent
Keely Giles	Michelle Price	Sylvia Fonseca
Natalie Miller	Keisha Robinson	Michelle Grove
Maripat Oliver	Brittney Sprouse	Kelly King
Crystal Rekart	Danny Tolliver Jr.	Guests
Elizabeth Richmond	Karen Wardlaw	Christine Feldman
Danielle Sanders	Mark Werner	Katie Friend
Karen Taylor	Jeremy Wheeler	Vanessa James
Amy Trotter		Khadija Khan
Julie Yelverton		Rachel Meyer
		Laura Molina
		Katelyn Phillips
		Dayveon Rocquemoire

Welcome and Introductions

Elizabeth Richmond, IAAC co-chair, opened the meeting at 9:15 a.m. Elizabeth reported that council member Danny Tolliver submitted absence forms for several meetings and Maria Nanos submitted her resignation.

Approval of Minutes from 10/19/18 Meeting

Elizabeth Richmond

The October minutes will be updated to remove the SWFCAC minutes section and include the motion to adjourn by Amy Trotter with a second from Danielle Sanders. Keely Giles moved to approve the corrected minutes. Kathleen Bush seconded and the motion passed.

Adoption Celebration

Council

Plans are underway for screening the Instant Family movie, an adult comedy that premieres November 16th. Some areas will offer an “Adoptive Parents Night Out” at local theaters, distributing literature and providing support. Jen Florent will prepare and share print materials and social media posts.

Communications Update

Jen Florent

This is Adoption Month and the Governor’s proclamation has been published on Facebook and may be distributed to the council as needed. Adoption Month posters are available. The new post-adoption book is updated and will be available in Central Stores. Jen received an Email from the Central Region Resource and Recruitment Supervisor asking whether there was any effort to update foster/adoptive parent recruitment materials. The current one has been in use for 10 years. Council members should send posts to Jen for Facebook, Twitter, etc. No decision has been made re: the *Illinois Families Now & Forever* collaboration with the national magazine.

Local Specialized Family Support Program Update Laura Molina, Catholic Charities

Laura's agency serves adoptive families in the entire Cook County area, including international adoptions. She stated that families approach the agency due to major behavioral problems, crisis management, etc. and no families are turned away for services. They offer clinical evaluations, family support groups, therapy, case management and other supports for one year, with extensions on an as needed basis. They work with DCFS, the Center for Law & Social Work, etc. They work with DCFS post-adoption specialists to help families recognize that behaviors they are noticing may result from the adoption background. They offer post-adoption services providing parents with a break and youth with a mentor that meets with the youth weekly outside the home. Another way they support families is by providing financial assistance for respite for adoptive parents. Depending on funding, they are sometimes able to provide summer camp opportunities for the children. Her office also provides another program with specialized activities for children and youth who've been sexually abused.

Parents often enter the program due to behavioral issues children display, but find that as parents they have experienced secondary trauma and need to address parenting issues, as well. Adoption conversion training is offered to support foster parents as they complete adoptions. The training includes responding in a lifelong way to grief and loss and identifying parenting strengths, supports and needs to prepare for the transition to adoption. Staff need to do more to help parents recognize that they should anticipate support needs to come. It is the worker's responsibility to help push the culture shift, helping parents understand the likelihood of needing help in the future and that seeking help early is the key.

The council discussed making the work of this council accessible to adoptive parents statewide for support and resource sharing. The council may work on meeting in the Southern Region, using Adoptive Parent Café's, etc.

Kelly noted that Post Adoption Guardianship Handbooks have been updated and will be printed and available in Central Stores. Since the English version has been approved, it will be translated into Spanish and printed.

Adoption Award Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth presented an adoption award to Vanessa James, adoptive parent and former editor of *Illinois Families Now and Forever* newsletter. The certificate was presented in appreciation and acknowledgement of Vanessa's dedication to and advocacy for the health and well-being of foster and adopted children and their families.

Adoption Subsidy Forms Karen Taylor

Karen Taylor provided a review of all the subsidy forms needed for the adoption or guardianship of a child.

The discussion included the following:

- The CFS 1800 AA and AG forms are the determination of the child's eligibility for a subsidy. Karen emphasized that children are eligible for subsidies, not families, so a family's income may not be taken into consideration in determining eligibility. Also, workers are required to notify a family when a child is eligible for subsidy. Eligibility differs for adoption

and guardianship. For an adoption subsidy, the child must be over the age of one, or have a disability or be a sibling of a child who is eligible. For KinGAP, a child of any age is eligible if they meet several criteria including being placed with a relative for six months and the relative has been licensed for six months. Other state funded options for a guardianship subsidy require the child to be at least 12 years of age and with a licensed non-relative family or an unlicensed relative family. New Illinois legislation now allows for caregivers who have cared for a child for one year to be considered as fictive kin (and thus a relative), when a family-like relationship exists. This now expands the number of children eligible for KinGAP, which has no requirement related to the age of the child.

- The CFS 1800 BA/BG form is the family's application for the subsidy. Families may apply if the child is eligible for subsidy (via confirmation on the CFS 1800 AA or AG). Karen encourages workers to go over the form with families before it is completed to ensure that they understand the subsidy components for which they wish to apply. She warned families that a refusal to apply for and accept a subsidy prior to the legal action of adoption or guardianship means that the family would never be able to come back later and ask for it. She encourages all families to agree to take the subsidy and use it as a backup plan for the child as they grow to adulthood since a refusal is forever. She also trains workers to be persistent in encouraging the subsidy, and fully disclose the repercussions of turning it down. The application also requires the family to decide whether to add the child to private insurance or rely only on Medicaid. She encourages families to seek advice from their individual policy providers. Workers are not supposed to advise families on the decision since funding, policy and legislation changes frequently. Families should recognize that if private insurance is selected the family is fully responsible for all co-payments and deductibles and while Medicaid will become secondary coverage, it is not legal to use Medicaid as the primary insurance to avoid the cost of co-payments and deductibles.
- The CFS 1800 CA/CG is the actual agreement and is much like a contract. Again, Karen trains workers to thoroughly read through the document with the family so that they can explain any of the fine print that the family may find vague or confusing and to ensure that full disclosure regarding the child and birth family is completed. The worker can only provide non-identifying information regarding the birth family, but they must ethically and legally provide prospective adoption and guardianship families with all known background information about the child. She encourages families to ask for clarification of any of the information contained in the agreement even though they will have an attorney review it as well.
- CFS 1800 D is the form that acknowledges that the family has selected an attorney to represent them in the adoption hearing (the family does not need an attorney for a subsidized guardianship transfer), whether the attorney is on the attorney panel or not, and whether they have reviewed the subsidy on behalf of the family. Karen reminded families that workers are not to provide the attorney panel list to families and that a family may access the list via the DCFS internet site or the DCFS Advocacy Office.
- CFS PAGS is a form signed by the family indicating that they have been given all information about the services available to them after the adoption or guardianship has been completed. Karen emphasized that it is normal and expected that families will need help at

some point in the future and that families should not feel intimidated or wait too late to seek assistance through the post adoption/guardianship unit.

- CFS 470 H is the form that is signed to acknowledge that the worker has provided the family with **ALL** non-identifying background information that is available in the child's file about the child and their family.
- CFS 1800 P verifies that the amount of the monthly in the subsidy does not exceed that which the child receives in foster care. This is a federal requirement.

Karen indicated that she trains workers on the importance of working with caregivers to ensure their clear understanding of the subsidy provisions, the individual service components, those services that cannot be included in a subsidy, and the limits to the subsidy. She indicated that families must also advocate for themselves by asking workers to go over the forms with them and explain and clarify any confusing information. She also reminded families that they will receive a yearly recertification form from their post adoption/guardianship unit and in order to continue the subsidy and medical card the family must return the form each year. She stressed the importance of doing this in a timely manner. Sylvia stated, "We will be in your life as long as you want us in your life."

QIC Update/Phone line/Web site Caring and Sharing Training

Christine Feldman and Vanessa James

Christine reminded council members that Illinois is one of eight sites selected for the grant through the Children's Bureau. The grant had several components and focused on evaluation and intervention to determine if it can be considered "evidence based." Illinois used the TARGET program, Trauma Affect Regulation, Guidance for Education and Therapy. It was conducted in Cook region and in some counties in the Central Region. TARGET is a program for teens that is designed to show families one example of what post-adoption services can do and to prevent disruption. She noted that evaluation is the heart of the grant, but supporting and messaging adoptive parents is critical. One of the reasons they selected teens is that it's a selected interval and research shows that kids who hit puberty and adolescence have heightened problems. They also served some internationally adopted families. They will finish the data and it will be evaluated to see if these targeted outcomes made a difference.

They were able to add to the program to address prevention and messaging to help families and professionals understand that adoption is not the end of the journey, but rather the beginning of a different journey. Many people have been certified and will likely continue this work following the grant.

Some have reported that they like TARGET, but it's too long in some ways, too in-depth, etc. The program must be delivered in a consistent way for life of the grant, but now that they are finishing the evaluation, they are not tied to that approach. They plan to focus on offering T-4 which is a more flexible program, but it is very expensive. They plan to use a collaboration with staff in Clinical, Post-Adoption, Training and private agencies to identify the "best of the best" options for clinicians dealing with emotional regulation in order to develop a framework so that they can utilize these other programs that are extremely valuable. They will share all the good ideas around the state. Their goal is to make this lasting and sustainable, meeting the needs of children for years to come.

Sylvia said that it has been a pleasure working collaboratively with the team and reinforced the goal to make the program sustainable in the state of Illinois. She noted that when staff are fiscally responsible, using the Platinum Box, it is like having a dowry that families pull out as they need items.

Vanessa showed a Facebook post referencing the new Caring and Sharing training. The post currently has 52 likes, has been shared 23 times and 319 link clicks have gone directly to Caring and Sharing. It's also available under public content on the Virtual Training Center (VTC).

Vanessa demonstrated the back end of the phone line, showing the touch-back activity. Follow up will continue until the need is met. The information is searchable and downloadable. They can follow up on the types of queries, the length of time it takes to answer questions and address issues, etc. Vanessa is still tweaking, but things are moving forward toward the hand-off. They may be revamping the business card process and there may be a way to move forward with the Path Beyond Adoption logo information with the 800 number. It might include white space to write in a contact name and number. The back might include the QR code to the web site. These could be distributed during Adoption Month.

The web site was held up due to new processes and rules. Thanks to Sylvia Fonseca's intervention it is now approved to move forward. Programmers are constructing it, hopefully in time to launch in November. They are trying to set up the contact form to go to the Adoption Unit. Staff is limited and they are trying to plan for distribution of duties and prompt responses. www.pathbeyondadoption.illinois.gov

Vanessa shared the IAAC proposal for the magazine collaboration with Neil Skene, but no final decision has been made yet. The only concern is that the state message is not lost or diluted by including in the magazine. Vanessa addressed it by stating that fresh content is always preferred.

The council's top priorities for the web site include the following:

- Having a very clear discussion of services adoptive parents are eligible for
- Application of services to foreign adoptions
- Address special segments, i.e. post adopt workers vs. subsidy workers.
- Add links to Spanish resources
- Provide a means to problem solving
- Statewide Provider Database
- Link to VTC
- Caring and Sharing Training
- Videos

Post adoption workers are support workers. They are not case managers. They process referrals and connect adoptive parents with resources they need. Staff rotate to cover operational needs. Referrals for prospective adoptive parents will go to the Center for Law and Social Work. They need to prioritize a way they can enable parents to network, i.e. possibly via signing up for a forum. Vanessa will meet this afternoon with the Do It project manager to follow up on updates

and work that needs to be accomplished going forward. Vanessa is around through September in a limited manner.

They are putting together a new video training that will explain how the services work. They conducted 15 interviews to address what happens on the stakeholder side and on the provider side.

Communications

Jen Florent

The council connected with Jen Florent by phone to discuss the possibility of using the Instant Family movie to promote Adoption Month in Illinois, possibly doing advance screenings in Illinois. Jen noted that the Department can make recruitment posters and signs, noting that they made posters for the Adoption Day event in Chicago. Jen asked council members to send her information regarding events, including photos, and she will share information on social media sites.

Adoption Update

Sylvia Fonseca / Kelly King

Sylvia said they are moving forward with moving adoptions through more quickly by providing extra support to private agencies as they lose staff to DCFS hiring. They are meeting quarterly with DCFS & POS workers and supervisors. They are also looking at post-adoption contracts. Kelly spoke about therapeutic day care. She clarified that it takes more than the child being qualified to set up therapeutic day care. In addition, the provider must be specially trained and equipped to handle the particular challenges of the child. Providers can send potential training programs to Kelly to see if it might result in the provider being qualified for the therapeutic rate. She added that families need education on what therapeutic day care is. Discussion revolved around the difficulty of finding qualified providers. If services are covered through the medical card, families should go through that provider first. If one cannot find a provider within a 25-mile radius, they can go through DCFS. If families don't know their subsidy workers, they may find out by calling the DCFS Post Adoption Unit at 866-538-8892.

Managed Care

The Managed Care presentation was postponed. Elizabeth reported that managed care implementation has been delayed. It is currently targeted to begin in early 2019. No date has been set. She also stated that the governor signed legislation that prevents medically fragile, technology dependent kids from mandatory managed care enrollment.

Motion: *Mark Werner moved to adjourn the meeting; Danielle Sanders seconded and the motion for adjournment carried.*

NEXT MEETING: Friday, February 1, 2019 at The Chateau Hotel in Bloomington, Illinois.